



Alaska FACE Facts 02AK010

Occupational Injury Prevention Program
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health-Section of Epidemiology

Logging show performer dies due to fall arrest system failure

Incident: During a community celebration, an independent contractor performing as a logging show clown (the victim) climbed atop a 90-foot pole where he performed a variety of stunts. At the close of his performance, he motioned for the audience to move closer together while he pretended to take a photograph. At this point in the act, he intentionally leaned back to feign an “accidental” fall. The fall was to be arrested by the performer’s safety rigging, which would also lower him to the ground.

The safety rigging consisted of a full body harness (hidden by the performer’s costume) attached to a block by a short tether of flexible steel wire rope and D-ring. The block was placed over a 5/16-inch cable and secured in the closed position with a closing pin. Due to a closing pin malfunction, the rigging failed. The performer fell to the ground landing on his back. On-site emergency technicians were summoned, and local emergency medical services were notified. The victim was transported to a local hospital where he died from his injuries.

Post-incident inspection of equipment -- While the body harness did not contribute to the fatal incident, it was noted to be heavily worn and showed signs of abrasion. In addition, the block used in this incident was designed and manufactured for a static load. The wire rope attached to the body harness appeared worn with several areas covered by electrical wire tape and did not appear to have any stress indicator threads present.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure that all harnesses, lines, and other rigging meets International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) minimum standards for static, shock, and pendulum loads;**
- **Ensure that all rigging is inspected, stored and maintained in a manner that prevents its exposure to elements that may effect its longevity and strength;**
- **Ensure that all “stunts” have a written safety plan that is reviewed with employers, sponsors, and persons responsible for hiring/contracting;**
- **Ensure that performers are given the authority to cancel if conditions and equipment are not conducive for safe operations.**

FACE reports, and FACE Fact flyers, can be viewed on the internet at:

[Http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chems/occupational_injury](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chems/occupational_injury)

Or call the Occupational Injury Prevention Program

907-269-8044 (phone) or 907-269-2041 (fax)